Part 3 of 4
BATMAN
YEAR 3
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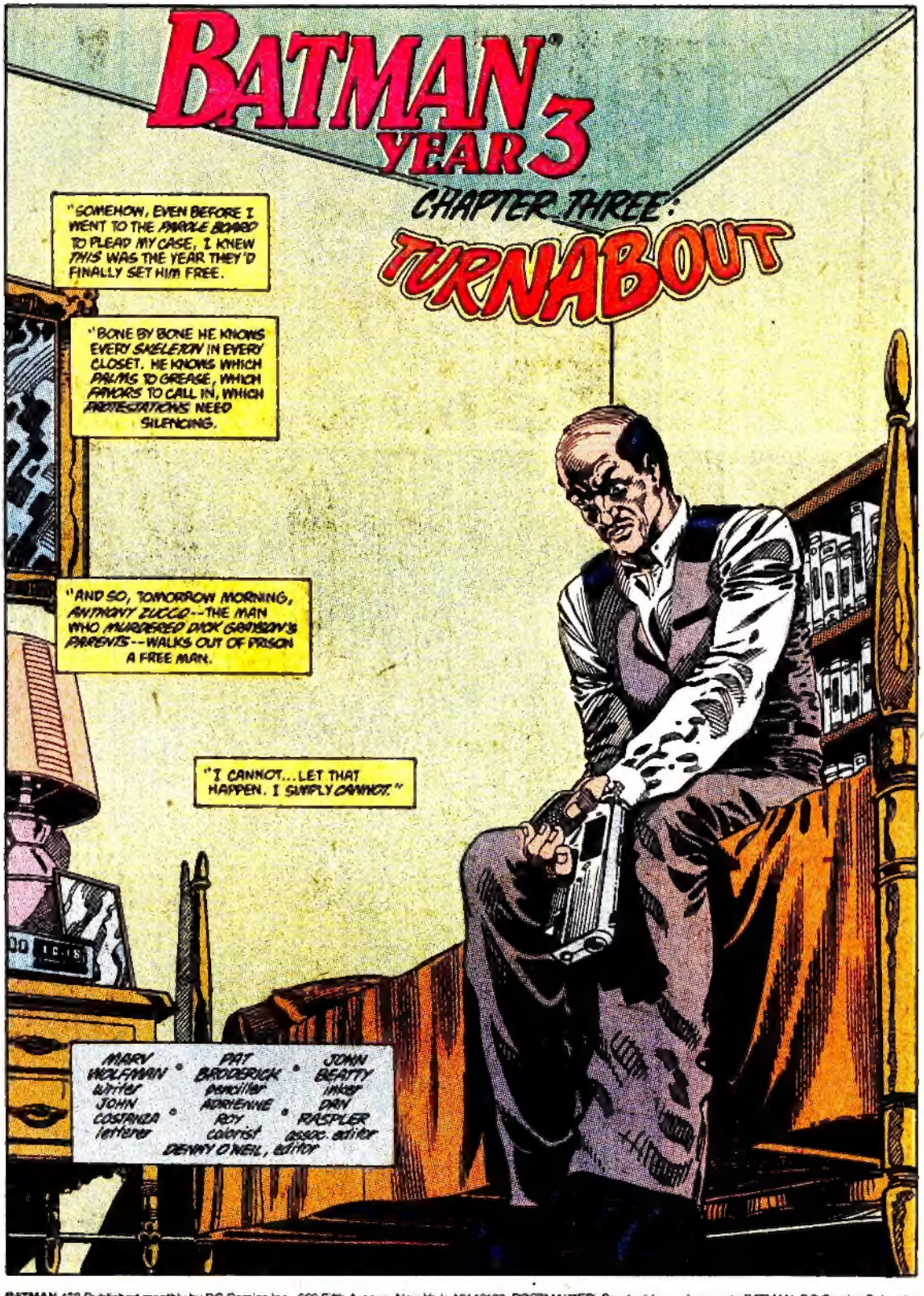
BATMAN YEAR 3
CHAPTER THREE:
TURNABOUT
"SOMEHOW, EVEN BEFORE I WENT TO THE MARBLE BOWED TO PLEAD MY CASE, I KNEW THIS WAS THE YEAR THEY'D FINALLY SET HIM FREE.
"BONE BY BONE HE KNOWS EVERY SKELETON IN EVERY CLOSET. HE KNOWS WHICH PALMS TO GREASE, WHICH FAVORS TO CALL IN, WHICH PROTESTATIONS NEED SILENCING.
"AND SO, TOMORROW MORNING, ANTHONY ZUCCO--THE MAN WHO MURDERED DICK GRAYSON'S PARENTS--WALKS OUT OF PRISON A FREE MAN.
"I CANNOT...LET THAT HAPPEN. I SIMPLY CANNOT."
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JOHN COSTANZA letterer
PAT BRODERICK penciller
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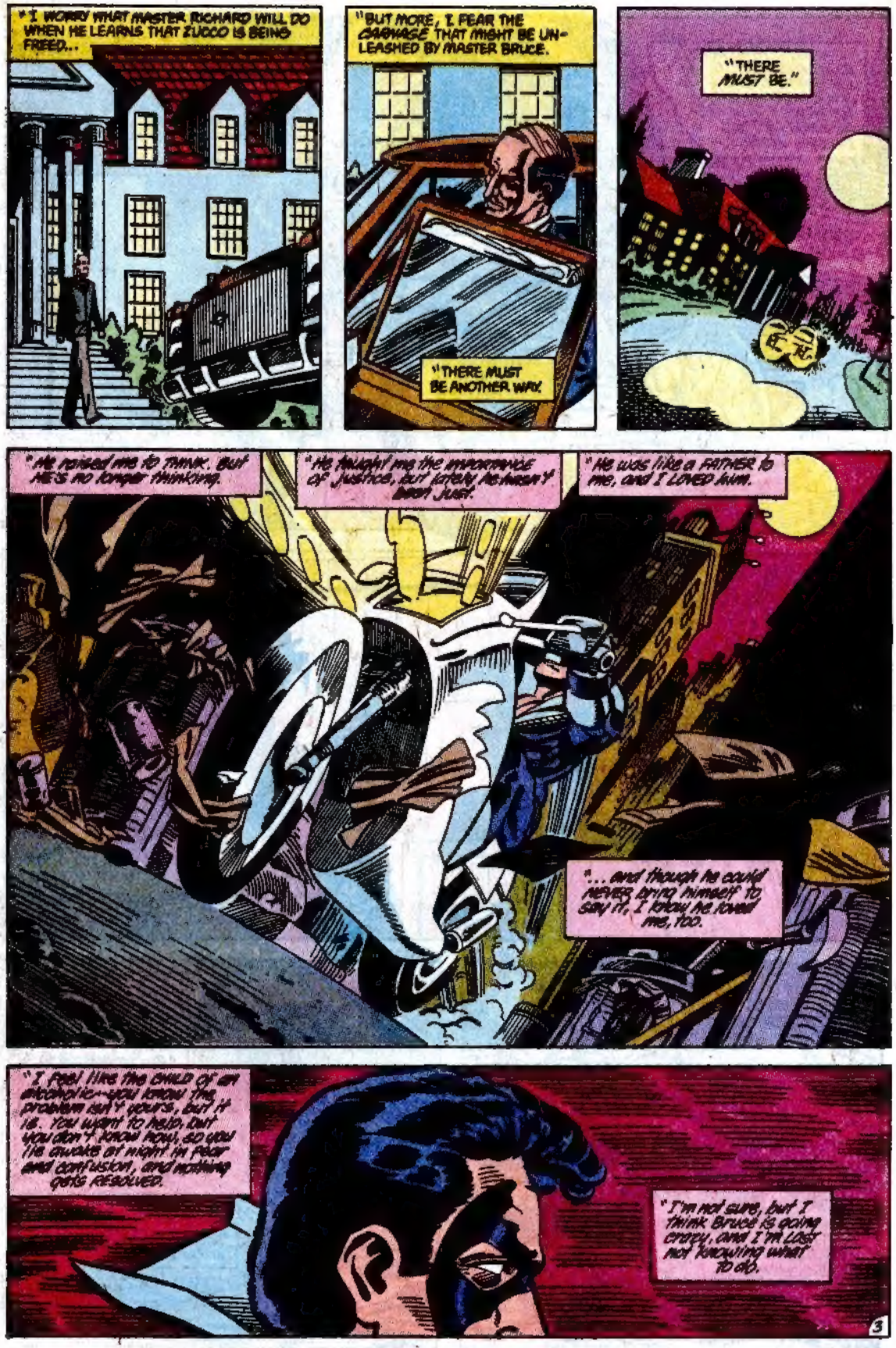
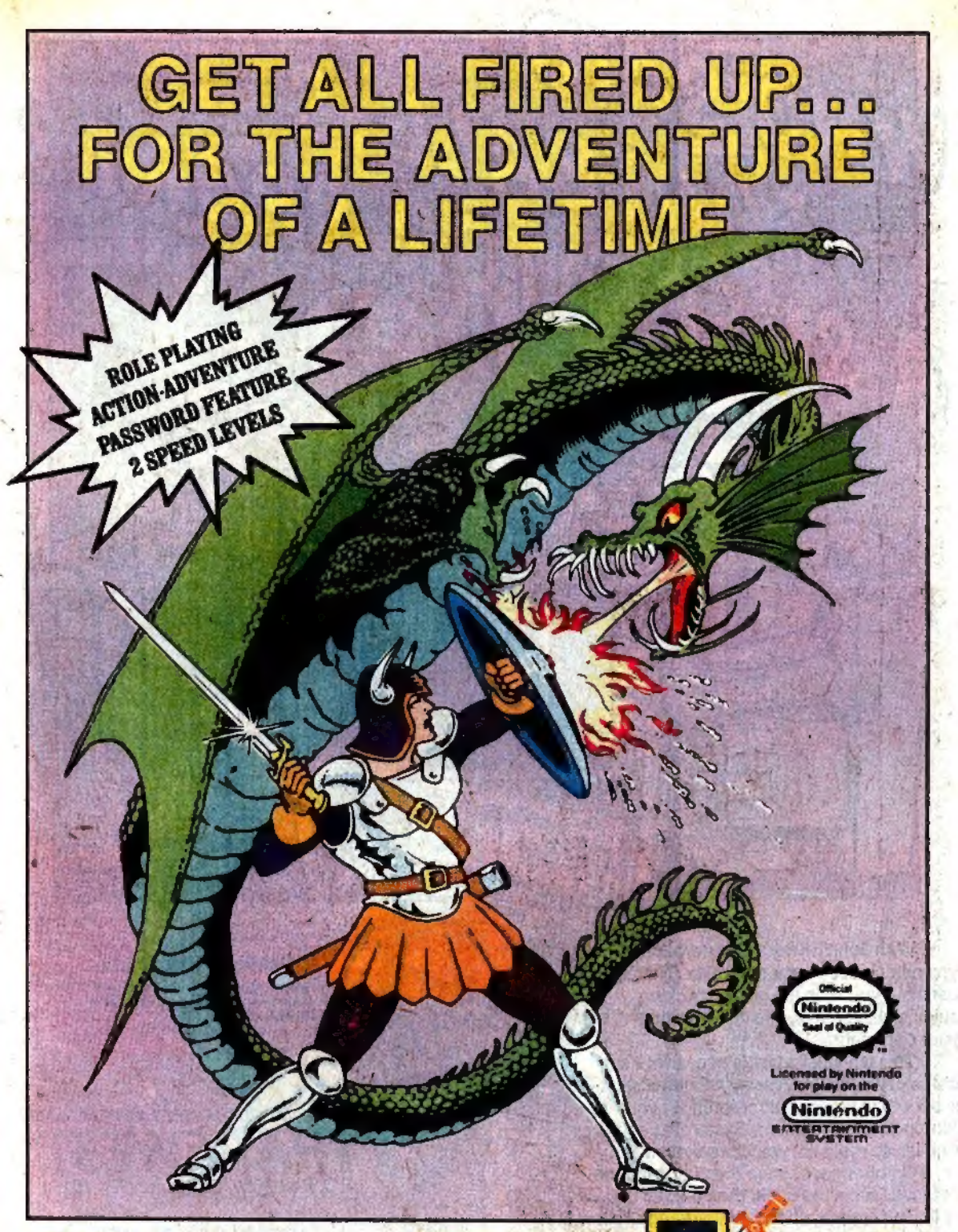
I--I'M SO SORRY, SIR...
...I CANNOT DO IT...
...NOT EVEN FOR YOU!


"I WORRY WHAT MASTER RICHARD WILL DO WHEN HE LEARNS THAT ZUCCO IS BEING FREED...
"BUT MORE, I FEAR THE CARNAGE THAT MIGHT BE UNLEASHED BY MASTER BRUCE.
"THERE MUST BE ANOTHER WAY.
"THERE MUST BE."
"He raised me to think. But HE'S no longer thinking.
"He taught me the importance of justice, but lately he hasn't been just.
"He was like a FATHER to me, and I LOVED him.
"...and though he could never bring himself to say it, I know he loved me, too.
"I feel like the child of an alcoholic--you know the problem isn't yours, but it is. You want to help, but you don't know how, so you lie awake at night in fear and confusion, and nothing gets resolved.
"I'm not sure, but I think Bruce is going crazy, and I'm lost not knowing what to do.
3

"I've heard it all before. My god, even Kory sometimes thinks Bruce has been crazy for years. I know he's obsessed with his parents death....
"...I know he may be cold and sometimes unfeeling, but I also know he's always in control. Or he was...
CHOK
"...until Jason died.
"He never called to tell me. I don't think he told anyone.
"But he removed ALL of Jason's memorabilia from the Batcave...
"...as if that could erase his memory.
4

GET ALL FIRED UP... FOR THE ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME



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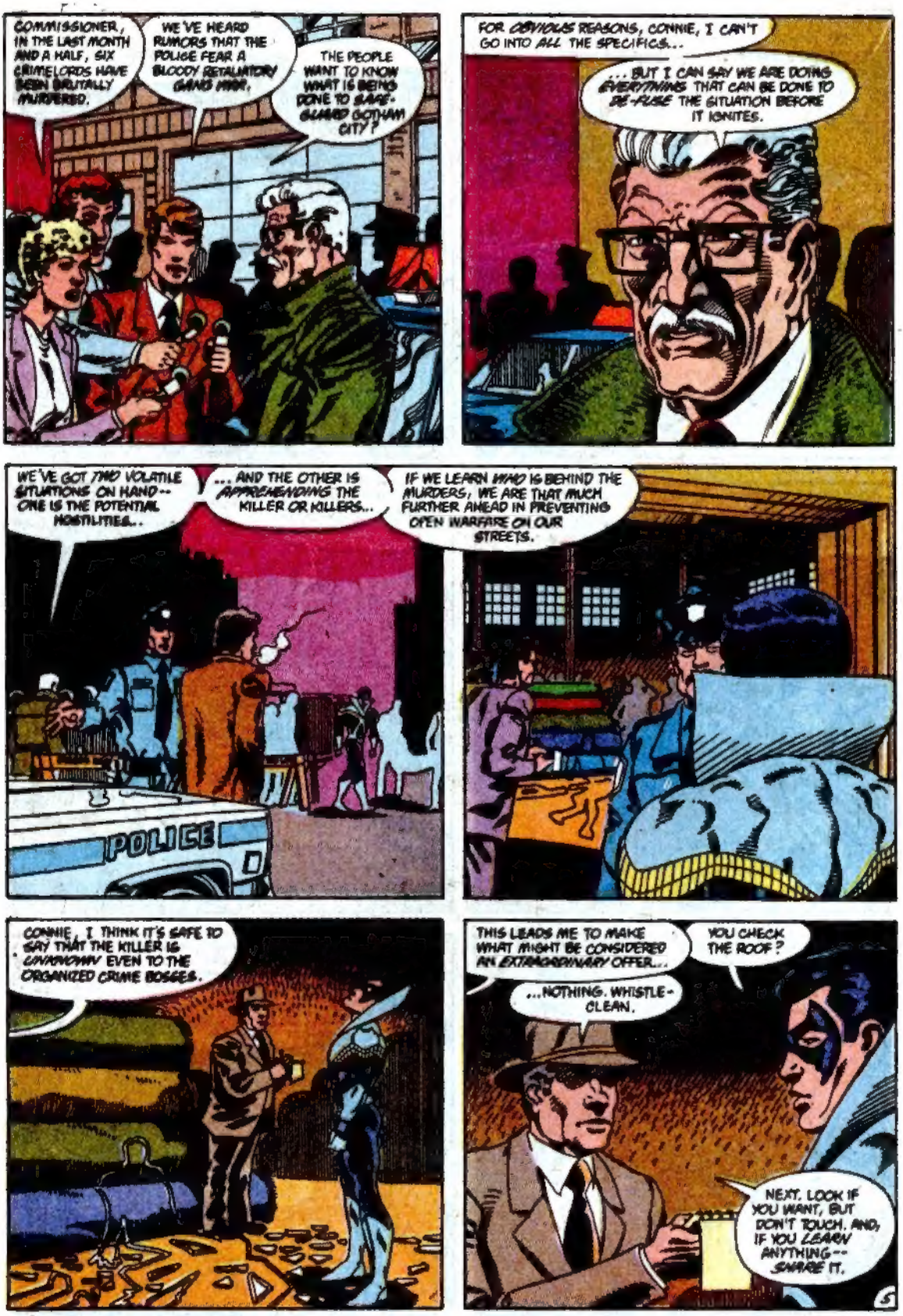
COMMISSIONER, IN THE LAST MONTH AND A HALF, SIX CRIMELORDS HAVE BEEN BRUTALLY MURDERED.
WE'VE HEARD RUMORS THAT THE POLICE FEAR A BLOODY RETALIATORY GANG WAR.
THE PEOPLE WANT TO KNOW WHAT IS BEING DONE TO SAFE-GUARD GOTHAM CITY?
FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, CONNIE, I CAN'T GO INTO ALL THE SPECIFICS...
...BUT I CAN SAY WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING THAT CAN BE DONE TO DE-FUSE THE SITUATION BEFORE IT IGNITES.
WE'VE GOT TWO VOLATILE SITUATIONS ON HAND -- ONE IS THE POTENTIAL HOSTILITIES...
...AND THE OTHER IS APPREHENDING THE KILLER OR KILLERS...
IF WE LEARN WHO IS BEHIND THE MURDERS, WE ARE THAT MUCH FURTHER AHEAD IN PREVENTING OPEN WARFARE ON OUR STREETS.
POLICE
CONNIE, I THINK IT'S SAFE TO SAY THAT THE KILLER IS UNANIMOUSLY EVEN TO THE ORGANIZED CRIME BOSSES.
THIS LEADS ME TO MAKE WHAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED AN EXTRAORDINARY OFFER...
YOU CHECK THE ROOF?
...NOTHING. WHISTLE-CLEAN.
NEXT. LOOK IF YOU WANT, BUT DON'T TOUCH. AND, IF YOU LEARN ANYTHING -- SHARE IT.
6

"The chances of finding anything are slim, but Batman taught me slim is better than zero.
CHECK ALL POSSIBILITIES. THEN DOUBLE CHECK THEM.
GO OVER YOUR NOTES UNTIL YOU KNOW YOUR EVIDENCE AS WELL AS YOU DO YOUR BELT SIZE.
CRIMINALS TEND TO BE SMUG-- THEY HAVE TO BE TO BELIEVE THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH MURDER.
THEIR ARROGANCE BREEDS MISTAKES. YOUR JOB IS TO BE SO THOROUGH THAT YOU FIND THOSE MISTAKES NO MATTER HOW IMPERCEPTIBLE.
WHEN YOU DO, CAPITALIZE ON IT. USE EVERY RESOURCE AVAILABLE TO YOU.
THE PEOPLE WE'RE AFTER HAVE BROKEN THE LAW. IT'S OUR JOB TO FIND THEM, STOP THEM, AND ARREST THEM.
"DO YOUR JOB WELL, AND YOU MAKE THAT ARREST STICK. DO YOUR JOB BADLY...
"...AND YOU MIGHT NOT GET A SECOND CHANCE."
DETECTIVE...
6

DETECTIVE ARYE. YOU FIND SOMETHING?
THINK SO. A THREAD SNAGGED ON THE GLASS
YOU CAN RUN TESTS, BUT I'D SAY THIS IS SILK--
--NOT THE SILK USED IN THE RUGS DOWNSTAIRS, BUT THE KIND THEY MAKE PARACHUTES WITH
WHICH MEANS THE KILLERS EITHER DESCENDED FROM A SMALL PLANE OR A HELICOPTER. BOTH OF WHICH MAKE CONSIDERABLE NOISE...
...WHICH ADDS TO THE LIKELIHOOD OF ITS BEING SPOTTED.
AND WHAT WAS SPOTTED, MIGHT JUST BE TRACED.
NOT BAD, KID. EVER THINK OF BECOMING A COP?
NAH. I HATE PUNCHING TIMECLOCKS.
BY THE WAY, I FOUND THIS. I THINK IT'S GOT A FINGER-PRINT ON IT.
WELL, WELL, THIS IS MY LUCKY NIGHT...
...WING. AS IN NIGHT WINGS! 'BYE.
...SO I PROPOSE A MEETING BETWEEN A NEGOTIATOR FOR THE CITY AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE VARIOUS ALLEGED CRIME FAMILIES...AT THEIR CHOICE OF LOCATION.
COMMISSIONER, ASSUMING THE ORGANIZED CRIME FAMILIES AGREE, WHO WOULD BE CRAZY ENOUGH TO MEET WITH THEM ON THEIR TURF--ALONE?
OH, I DON'T KNOW...
7

"...BUT I'M SURE WE CAN FIND SOMEONE."
BATMAN?
HOW'D ME GET HERE?
WHO CARES--
--WASTE 'IM!

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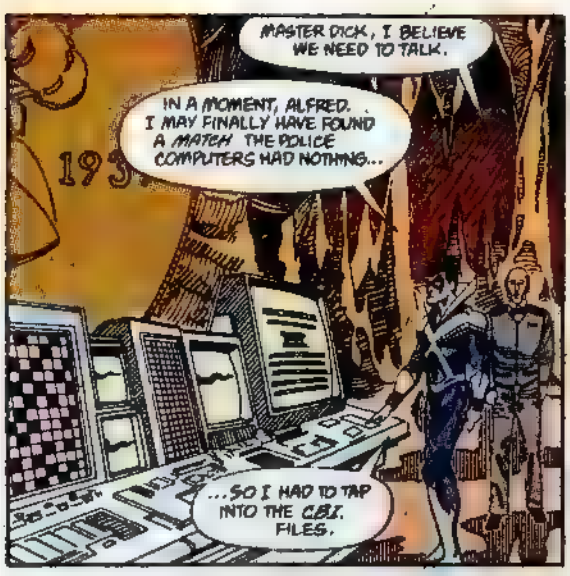
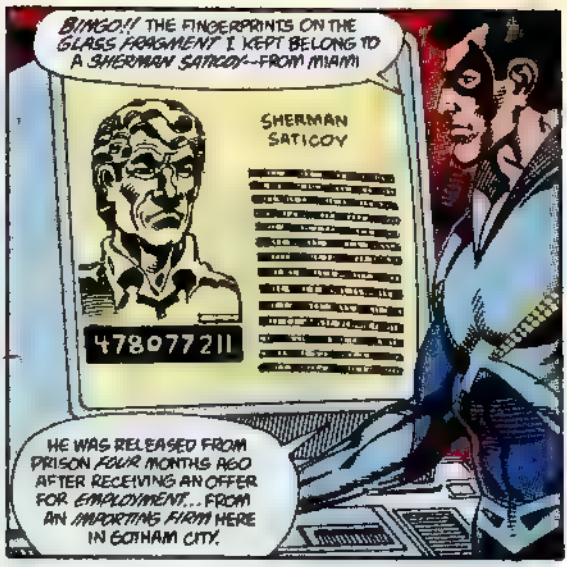
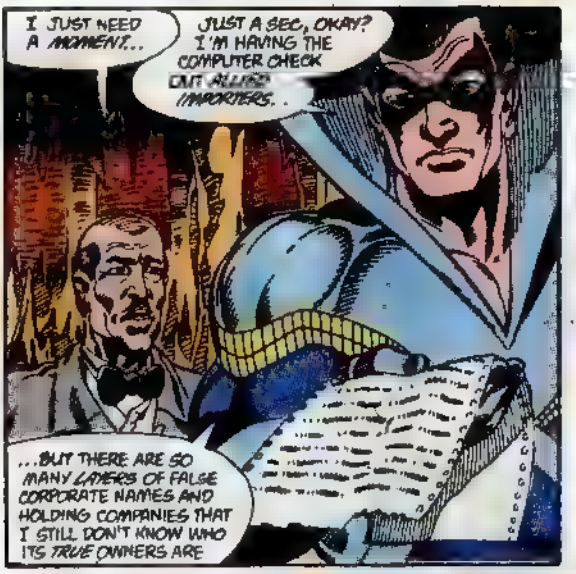
IF YOU DO, YOU CAN WATCH AS YOU'RE SLOWLY KILLED OFF. ONE BY ONE. BY WHOEVER IS OUT THERE.
IF YOU'RE STUPID, YOU'LL DO EXACTLY THAT.
AND FRANKLY, THAT'S WHAT I EXPECT YOU WILL DO.
THE BATMAN PUT AWAY SIX OF MY... CLOSEST FRIENDS. HE HAS MADE MY LIFE UN-COMFORTABLE FOR SEVERAL YEARS.
I HAVE LITTLE REASON TO TRUST HIM, NO REASON TO SEE HIM LIVE.
... WE KNOW ME IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NUMBER OF DEATHS THAT HAVE PLAGUED OUR... COLLEAGUES.
AND WE ALSO KNOW IF ANYONE IS CAPABLE OF LEARNING WHO OUR ENEMY IS--
-- IT IS ME. PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPONS. LET US LISTEN.
MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, AGOURA -- BUT I DON'T CARE.
HE'S BEEN BREATHIN' DOWN MY TAIL FOR TEN YEARS. HE'S DONE IT TO ALL OF US,
LOOK, WE'LL GET OUR HOTSHOT KILLER SOON ENOUGH.
BUT WE'RE NOT EVER GOING TO GET ANOTHER CHANCE LIKE THIS TO SKRAG BATMAN.
9

SIR, I PROTEST THIS. ALLOWING HIM TO SPEAK WITH MR. ZUCCO IS AGAINST ALL THE RULES.
GOTHAM PRISON
MR. TAFT, MR PENNYWORTH HAS OBTAINED A JUDGE'S SIGNATURE. LIKE IT OR NOT, IT IS FACT.
I ASSURE YOU THE REST OF THE PAROLE BOARD WILL HEAR OF THIS FIRST THING TOMORROW.
I THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME LIKE THIS, WARDEN.
DON'T THANK ME, MR PENNYWORTH. FRANKLY, THIS IS AN INCONVENIENCE.
IT COULD HAVE WAITED FOR THE MORNING.
MR ZUCCO'S PAID FOR HIS CRIMES. THERE'S NO REASON HE HAS TO LISTEN TO PENNYWORTH'S THREATS AGAINST HIM.
ENOUGH, TAFT. IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I'M AWARE.
MR PENNYWORTH, FOR ELEVEN YEARS YOU'VE PETITIONED THE PAROLE BOARD TO KEEP ME IMPRISONED. FOR TEN OF THOSE YEARS, FOR REASONS OF MY OWN, I ALLOWED YOU TO SUCCEED.
BUT THIS YEAR I FELT A SUDDEN URGENCY TO LEAVE AND SO, TOMORROW I BECOME A FREE MAN
NOW, ON THE EVE OF MY RELEASE, YOU COME TO SPEAK TO ME FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ALL THESE YEARS.
GO AHEAD NOW, MR PENNYWORTH...
...AMUSE ME.

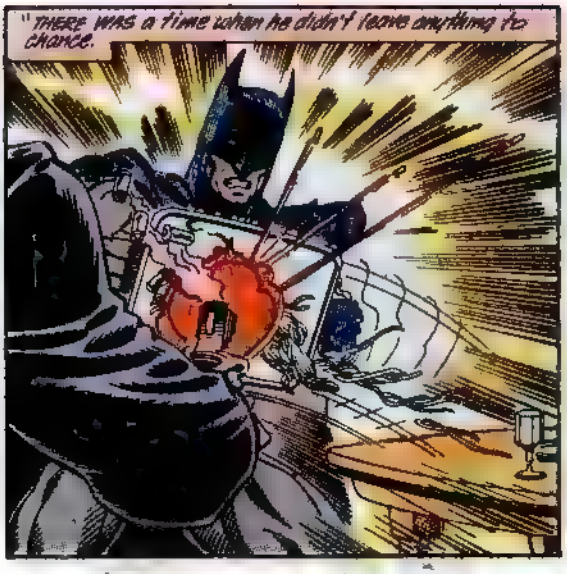
I WORK FOR MR. BRUCE WAYNE, THE MILLIONAIRE PHILANTHROPIST ELEVEN YEARS AGO HE TOOK AS HIS WARD A YOUNG BOY--
--RICHARD GRAYSON.
THE SON OF THE FAMILY YOU MURDERED.
I KNOW IT WAS HIS TESTIMONY THAT PUT YOU HERE.
BUT FOR HIS SAKE, FOR THE SAKE OF MR WAYNE, MY EMPLOYER, AND FOR YOUR OWN SAKE--
--I WILL PAY YOU WHATEVER IT TAKES FOR YOU TO LEAVE THIS CITY WHEN YOU ARE RELEASED.
ANYTHING IT TAKES.
ANYTHING.
LEAVE .. GOTHAM..?
HAHAHA
HAHAHAHAHAH

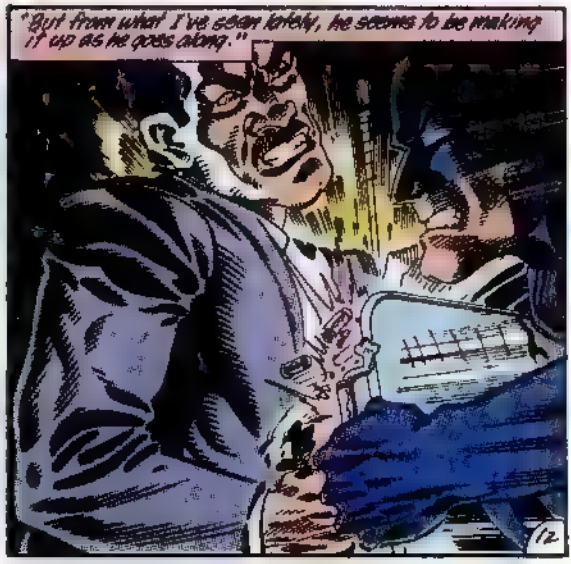

MASTER DICK, I BELIEVE WE NEED TO TALK.
IN A MOMENT, ALFRED. I MAY FINALLY HAVE FOUND A MATCH. THE POLICE COMPUTERS HAD NOTHING...
...SO I HAD TO TAP INTO THE C.B.I. FILES.

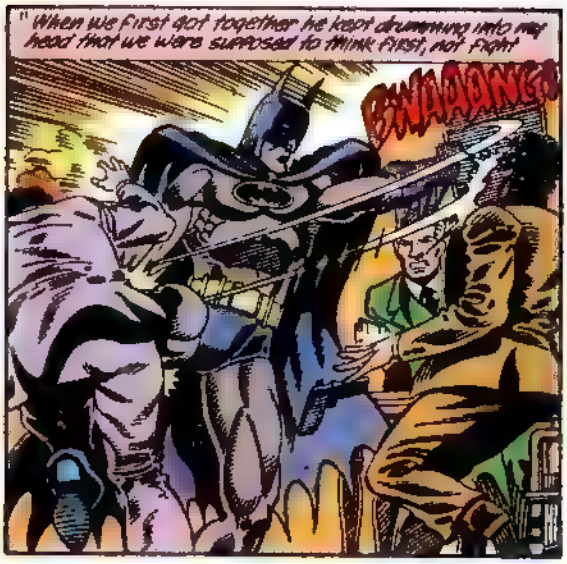

BINGO!! THE FINGERPRINTS ON THE GLASS FRAGMENT I KEPT BELONG TO A SHERMAN SATICOY--FROM MIAMI
SHERMAN SATICOY
478077211
HE WAS RELEASED FROM PRISON FOUR MONTHS AGO AFTER RECEIVING AN OFFER FOR EMPLOYMENT...FROM AN IMPORTING FIRM HERE IN GOTHAM CITY.

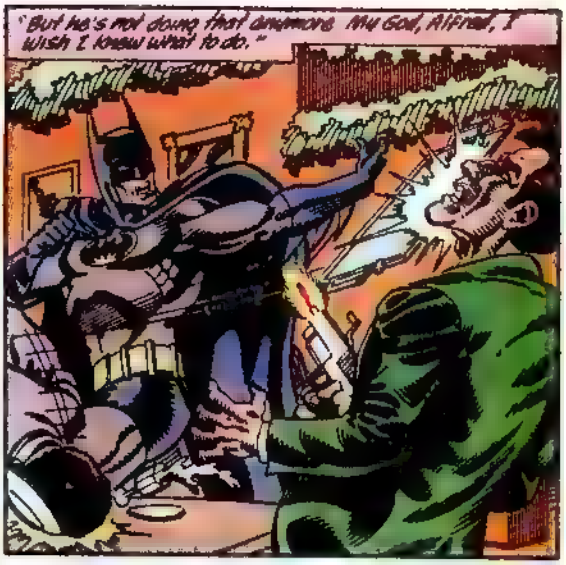

I JUST NEED A MOMENT...
JUST A SEC, OKAY? I'M HAVING THE COMPUTER CHECK OUT ALLIED IMPORTERS...
...BUT THERE ARE SO MANY LAYERS OF FALSE CORPORATE NAMES AND HOLDING COMPANIES THAT I STILL DON'T KNOW WHO ITS TRUE OWNERS ARE

BATMAN ALWAYS TOLD ME TO DO MY HOMEWORK FIRST. "BEFORE YOU MOVE, KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING INTO."

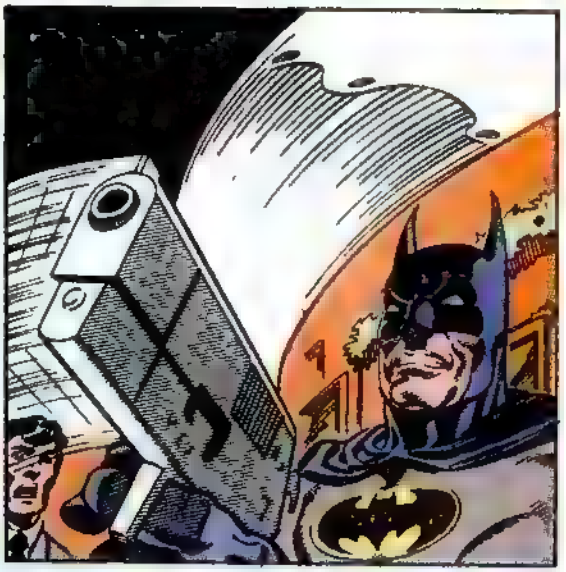

"THERE WAS A TIME WHEN HE DIDN'T LEAVE ANYTHING TO CHANCE.

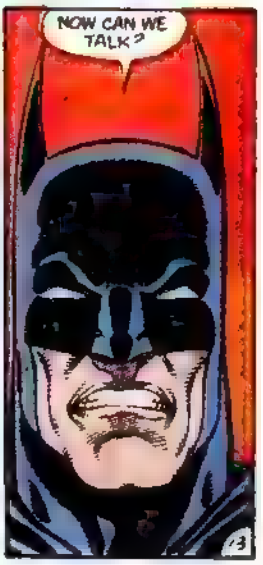

"BUT FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN LATELY, HE SEEMS TO BE MAKING IT UP AS HE GOES ALONG."
12


"When we first got together he kept drumming into my head that we were supposed to think first, not fight!
BWAAAANG!

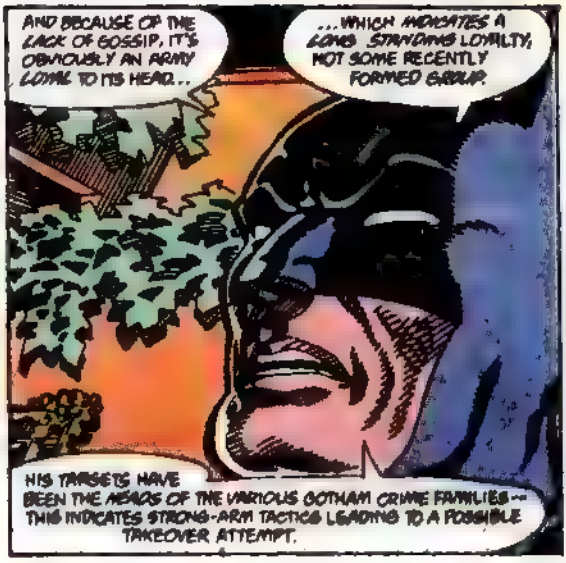

"But he's not doing that anymore. My God, Alfred, I wish I knew what to do."

"He isn't acting like himself anymore. I'm afraid he's almost capable of doing anything."



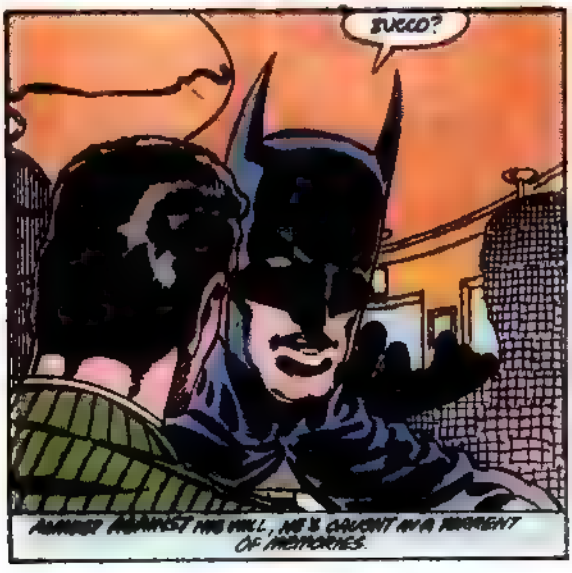

NOW CAN WE TALK?
13

I INTERROGATED HALF THE INFORMERS IN THE CITY, AND NOBODY KNOWS ANYTHING.
YET, WHOEVER'S BEHIND THE KILLINGS HAS HIS OWN ARMY TO CARRY OUT HIS ORDERS.

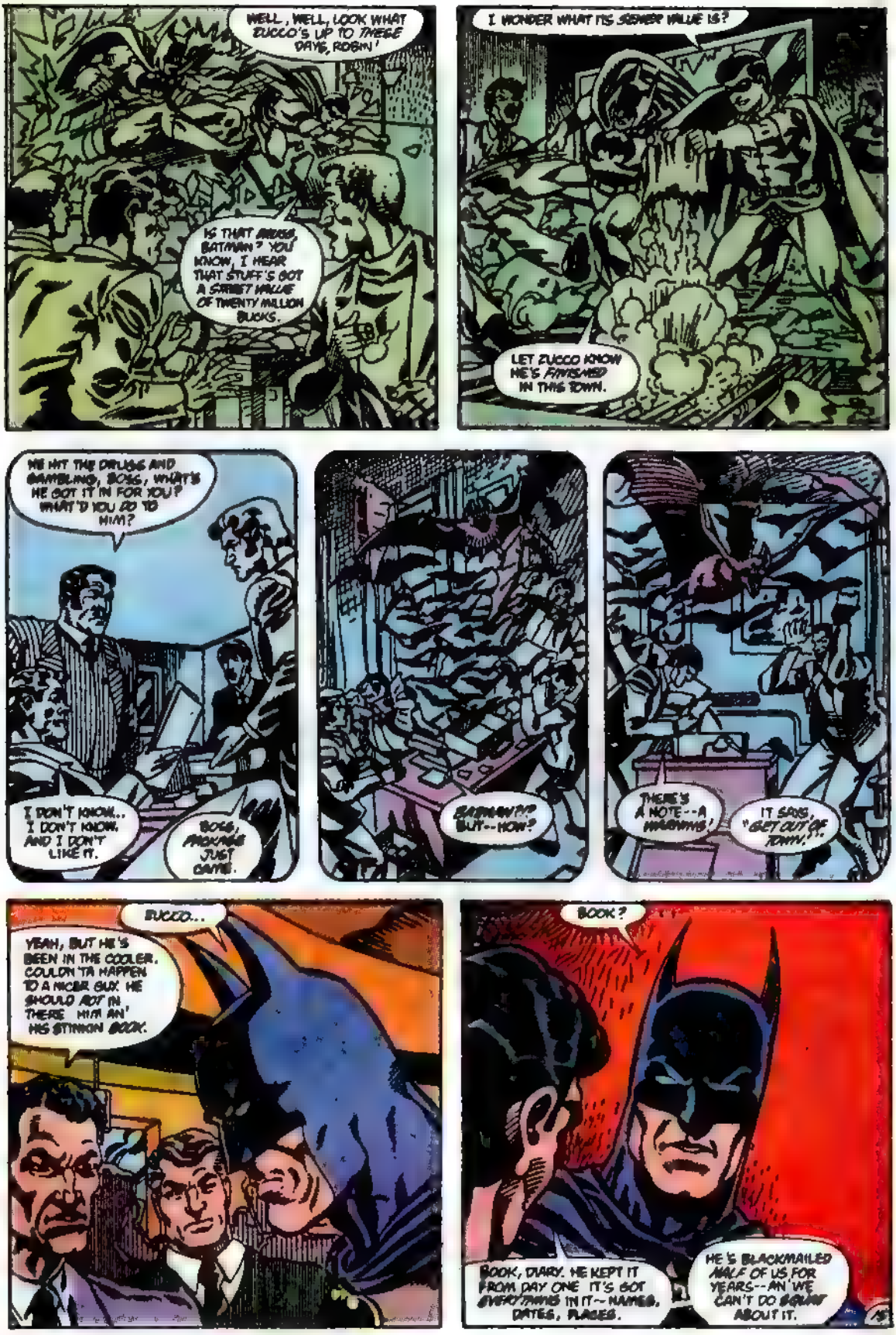

AND BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF GOSSIP, IT'S OBVIOUSLY AN ARMY LOYAL TO ITS HEAD...
...WHICH INDICATES A LONG STANDING LOYALTY, NOT SOME RECENTLY FORMED GROUP.
HIS TARGETS HAVE BEEN THE HEADS OF THE VARIOUS GOTHAM CRIME FAMILIES -- THIS INDICATES STRONG-ARM TACTICS LEADING TO A POSSIBLE TAKEOVER ATTEMPT.

YOU SAYING ONE OF US IS TRYIN' TO RUB OUT THE OTHERS? NO WAY -- WE ALL GOT, UHH -- FRIENDS IN PLACES WHO'D SQUEAL REAL FAST.
ARE ALL THE FAMILIES REPRESENTED HERE?

ALL THE ACTIVE FAMILIES. VALERIO PACKED IT IN. TOMMY TOPANGA, HE'S BEEN A VEGETABLE EVER SINCE THE MALIBU JOB.
VAN NUYS AN' SEPULVEDA MERGED WITH LOUIE ENCINO. AN' ANTHONY ZUCCO'S BOYS HAVE BEEN DRIBBLIN' IN THEIR BEER WAITIN' FOR TONY TO GO FREE.

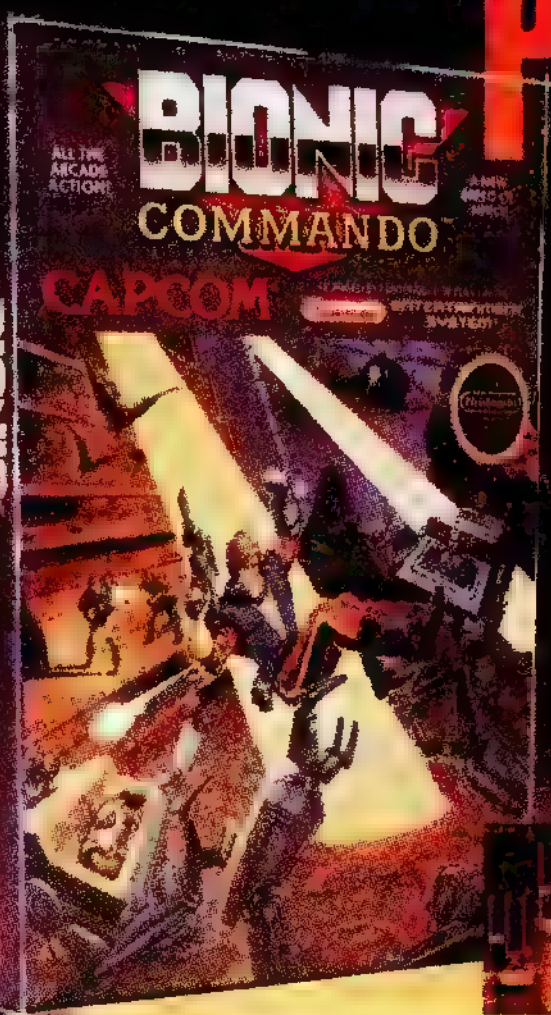

ZUCCO?
ARMED AGAINST HIS WILL, HE IS CAUGHT IN A FRAGMENT OF MEMORIES.

TELL ZUCCO NONE OF HIS OPERATIONS ARE SAFE...
NOT FROM THE BRAND-NEW TEAM OF BATMAN AND ROBIN!
AND PLEASE -- MAKE SURE YOU GET THAT LAST NAME RIGHT.


WELL, WELL, LOOK WHAT ZUCCO'S UP TO THESE DAYS, ROBIN!
IS THAT BRASS, BATMAN? YOU KNOW, I HEAR THAT STUFF'S GOT A STREET VALUE OF TWENTY MILLION BUCKS.
I WONDER WHAT ITS SEWER VALUE IS?
LET ZUCCO KNOW HE'S FINISHED IN THIS TOWN.
HE HIT THE DRUGS AND GAMBLING, BOSS, WHAT'S HE GOT IT IN FOR YOU? WHAT'D YOU DO TO HIM?
I DON'T KNOW... I DON'T KNOW. AND I DON'T LIKE IT.
BOSS, FORGIVE JUST CAME.
BATMAN?! BUT--HOW?
THERE'S A NOTE--A WARNING!
IT SAYS, "GET OUT OF TOWN!"
ZUCCO...
YEAH, BUT HE'S BEEN IN THE COOLER. COULDN'TA HAPPEN TO A NICER GUY. HE SHOULD ROT IN THERE HIM AN' HIS STINKIN BOOK.
BOOK?
BOOK, DIARY. HE KEPT IT FROM DAY ONE IT'S GOT EVERYTHING IN IT--NAMES, DATES, PLACES.
HE'S BLACKMAILED HALF OF US FOR YEARS--AN' WE CAN'T DO SQUAT ABOUT IT.

THIS IS AN UNEASY TRUCE WE HAVE, BATMAN. YOU ARE GATHERING INFORMATION ABOUT US THAT I FIND... DISQUIETING.
YOU WISH OUR ASSISTANCE, WE NEED ASSURANCES.
IT'S YOUR NECK ON THE LINE. I CAN HAND YOU ALL OVER TO THE KILLER BY DOING NOTHING.
COOPERATE, AND UNLESS I FIND EVIDENCE TO PUT YOU ALL AWAY-- WHOEVER'S LEFT AMONG YOU CAN FIGHT FOR MOB CONTROL...
YOUR CHOICE.
IF YOU WERE ONE OF US, YOU WOULD OWN THIS CITY
I COULDN'T WASH OFF THE DIRT
WHAT ABOUT ZUCCO? HE KEPT SAYIN' HE WAS GOING TO USE THAT BOOK TO TAKE OVER EVERYTHING.
AN' I JUST HEARD-- HE'S FINALLY GETTIN' OUT..
...TOMORROW
6

BIONIC POWER



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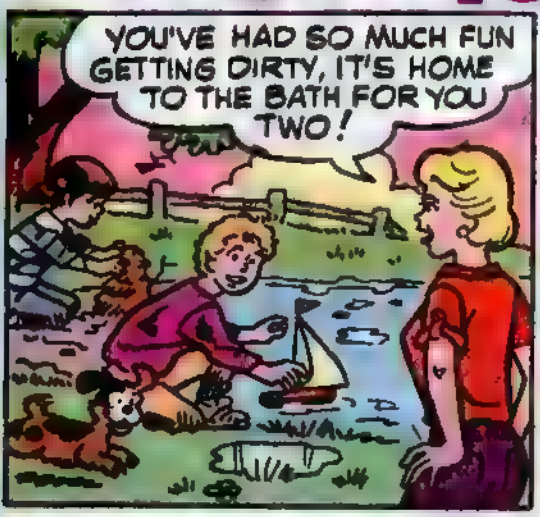
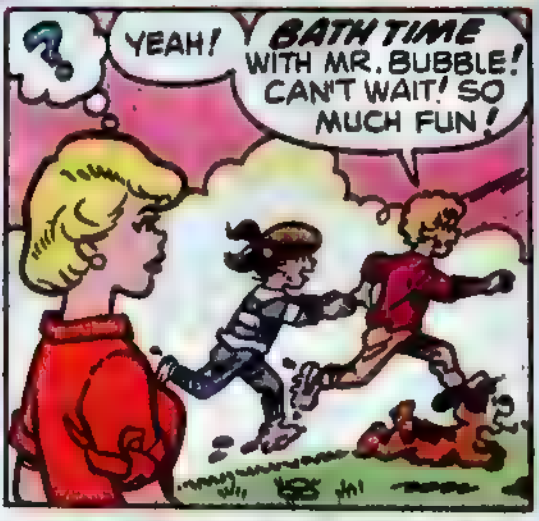
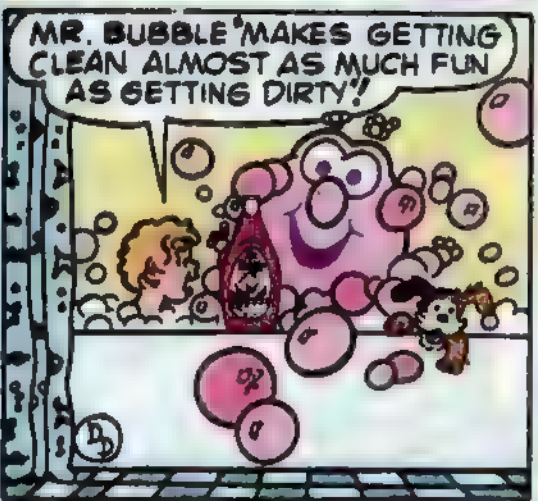
Screen shots from the Nintendo Entertainment System

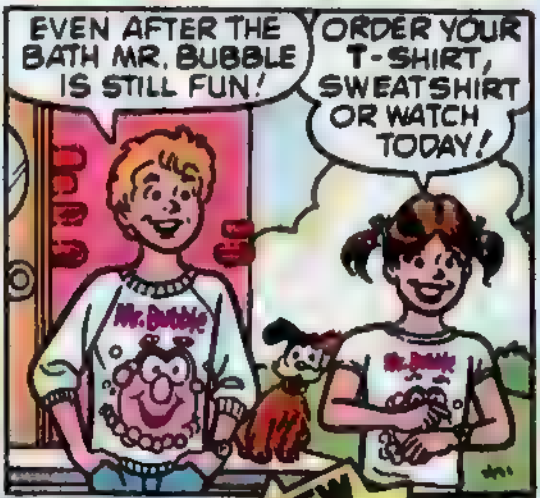
CAPCOM

Mr. Bubble's Tub Tales...









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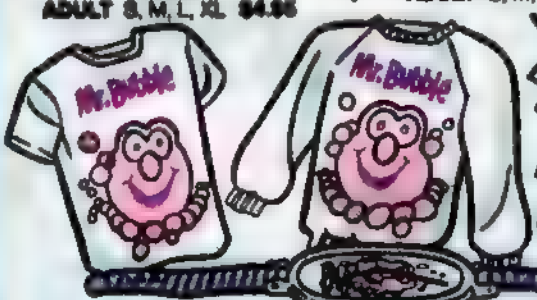

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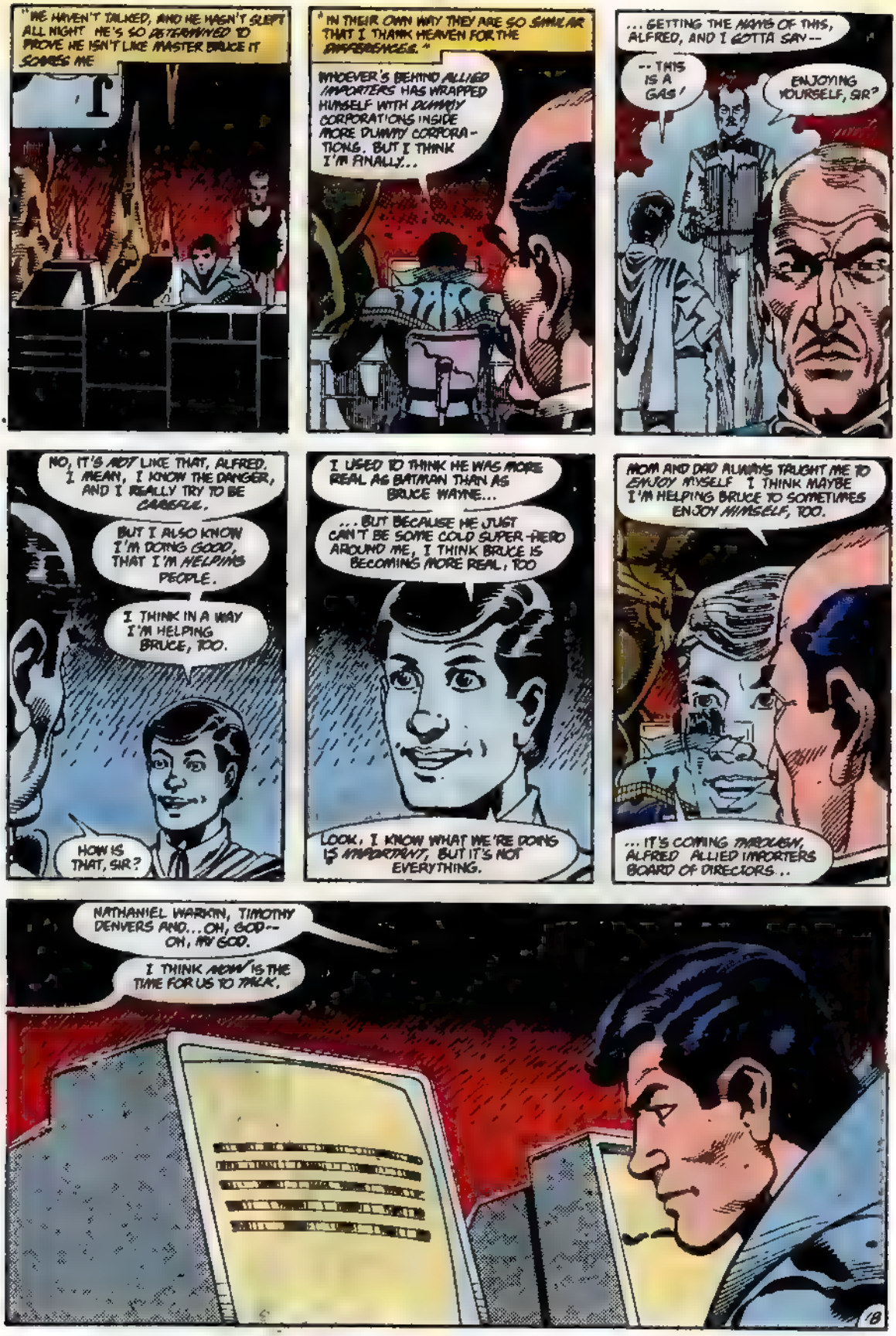
...HEY, C'MON, I DON'T KNOW NOTHIN'. WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOIN'? I TOL' YA-- I AIN'T HEARD FROM THE BOSS IN YEARS.
DREXEL, THE I.R.S. SAYS YOU WORK FOR BIS/MEGASTAR ENTERTAINMENT!-- WHICH WE ALL KNOW IS OWNED BY ANTHONY ZUCCO.
WE ALSO KNOW YOU HAVEN'T DONE A LEGAL DAY'S WORK IN YOUR LIFE. YOU WERE AND ARE A MEMBER OF ZUCCO'S MOB.
WHY NOT DROP THE PRETENSE.
I WANT INFORMATION ON THE GANG KILLINGS. IF YOU DON'T GIVE IT TO ME -- THAT'S OKAY.
I'LL LEAVE THE ROOM AND LET YOU AND THESE -- GENTLEMEN -- DISCUSS WHO MIGHT BE KILLING THEM OFF
YOUR CHOICE. THEM OR ME.
I'LL TALK! I'LL TALK!!
WHEN YOU'RE DONE, HE'S OURS.
GRENADA...
...DON'T EVEN THINK IT
17


"HE HAVEN'T TALKED, AND HE HASN'T SLEPT ALL NIGHT HE'S SO DETERMINED TO PROVE HE ISN'T LIKE MASTER BRUCE IT SCARES ME
"IN THEIR OWN WAY THEY ARE SO SIMILAR THAT I THANK HEAVEN FOR THE DIFFERENCES."
WHOEVER'S BEHIND ALLIED IMPORTERS HAS WRAPPED HIMSELF WITH DUMMY CORPORATIONS INSIDE MORE DUMMY CORPORATIONS. BUT I THINK I'M FINALLY...
... GETTING THE HANG OF THIS, ALFRED, AND I GOTTA SAY--
-- THIS IS A GAS!
ENJOYING YOURSELF, SIR?
NO, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT, ALFRED. I MEAN, I KNOW THE DANGER, AND I REALLY TRY TO BE CAREFUL.
BUT I ALSO KNOW I'M DOING GOOD, THAT I'M HELPING PEOPLE.
I THINK IN A WAY I'M HELPING BRUCE, TOO.
HOW IS THAT, SIR?
I USED TO THINK HE WAS MORE REAL AS BATMAN THAN AS BRUCE WAYNE...
... BUT BECAUSE HE JUST CAN'T BE SOME COLD SUPER-HERO AROUND ME, I THINK BRUCE IS BECOMING MORE REAL, TOO
LOOK, I KNOW WHAT WE'RE DOING IS IMPORTANT, BUT IT'S NOT EVERYTHING.
MOM AND DAD ALWAYS TAUGHT ME TO ENJOY MYSELF I THINK MAYBE I'M HELPING BRUCE TO SOMETIMES ENJOY HIMSELF, TOO.
... IT'S COMING THROUGH, ALFRED ALLIED IMPORTERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS..
NATHANIEL WARKIN, TIMOTHY DENVERS AND... OH, GOD-- OH, MY GOD.
I THINK NOW IS THE TIME FOR US TO TALK.
18

I've thought about my parents at least once every day since they died--but long ago I forced blood out of my mind
And now he's free like what happened never happened
But my parents are STILL dead And that's not going to change And my getting mad or crazy about it won't change it either
So why am I going to watch as they let him walk?
BATMAN? HOW DID HE FIND OU--
I should know the answer by now. He knows because he's Batman. He's Batman because he knows.
ZUCCO'S BEHIND THE GANGLAND KILLINGS.
I KNOW. AND THEY'RE ARRAIGNING HIM TODAY
IN EXACTLY TWENTY MINUTES.
MIND IF I SIT DOWN?
YOU REALIZE WITH WHAT WE KNOW WE COULD STOP HIM BEFORE HE LEAVES.
YEAH
. . BUT I WANT HIM TO TASTE FREEDOM FOR JUST A MOMENT BEFORE WE DO.
I SPENT THE NIGHT HUNCHED OVER A COMPUTER HOW DID YOU FIND OUT?
BY PRAYING I WOULDN'T HAVE TO WASH OFF TOO MUCH DIRT

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU PULLED STRINGS WITH THE PAROLE BOARD, ZUCCO, BUT LETTING YOU OUT IS NOT MY FONDEST DESIRE.
WARDEN, MY HEART BLEEDS.
SIR, I PROTEST YOUR INFERENCE THAT--
SAVE IT, TAFT. I DON'T CARE WHY YOU SOLD OUT.
JUST KNOWING YOU DID MAKES ME SICK.
ESCORT HIM OUT YOURSELF.
I DON'T HAVE THE HEART.
TAKE CARE, WARDEN. I'LL GIVE THE GOVERNOR A GLOWING REPORT OF YOUR WORK HERE.
SIR... I DID AS I SAID I WOULD...
YOU'RE A LIAR, TAFT. YOU DID WHAT YOU HAD TO BECAUSE IN MY LEDGER I HAD PROOF THAT IN 1979 YOU BRIBED A JUDGE
SO DON'T GIVE ME ANY GARBAGE. I'VE GOT YOU HOOK, LINE AND SINKER, AND I DON'T INTEND TO SET YOU FREE.
YOU'RE MINE, TAFT. YOU HALF THE LAW IN THE CITY, AND, SOON AS I GET BACK MY LITTLE BOOK...
...EVERY CON, THIEF, SWINDLER AND CRIMINAL IN THE STATE.
20

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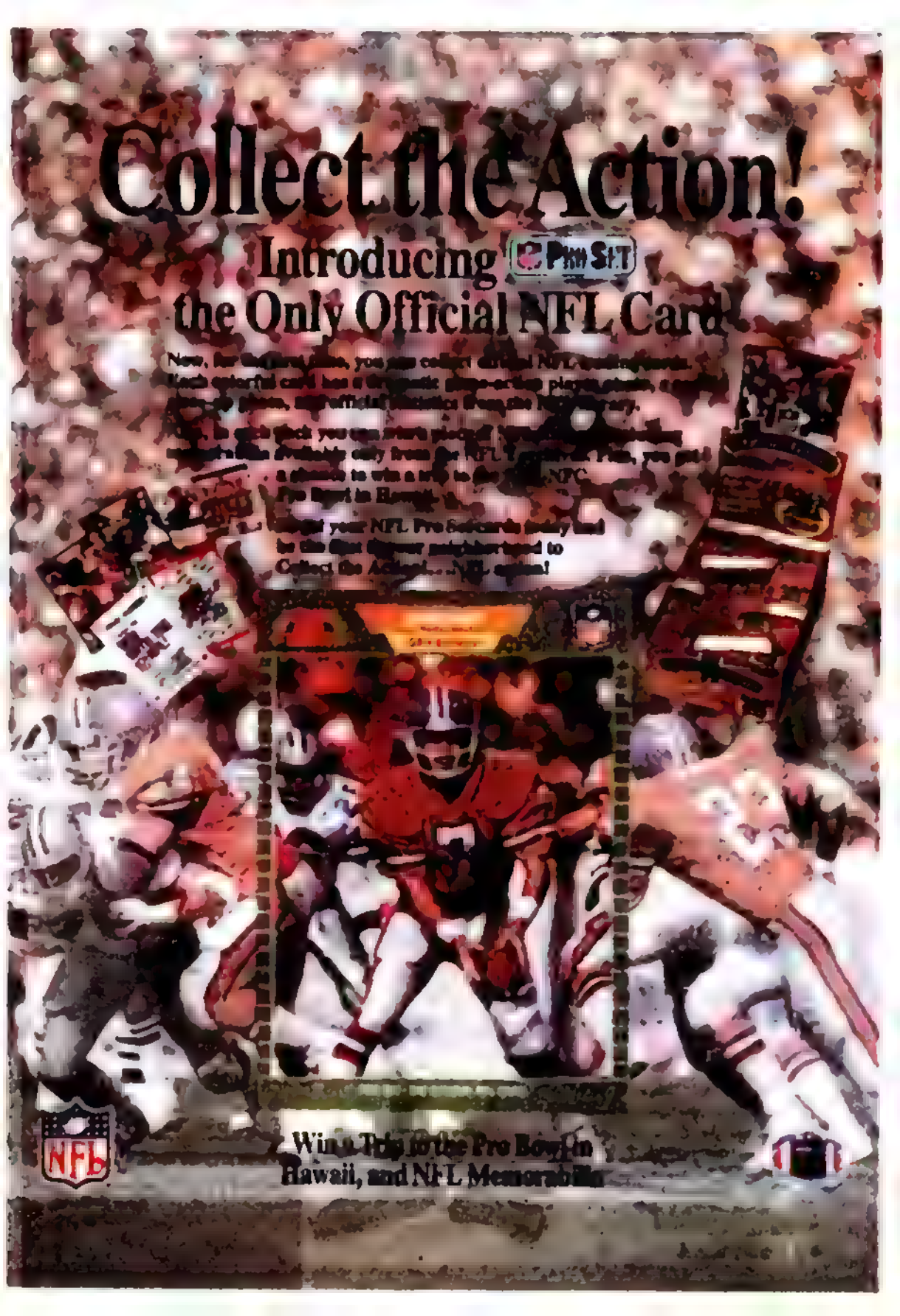

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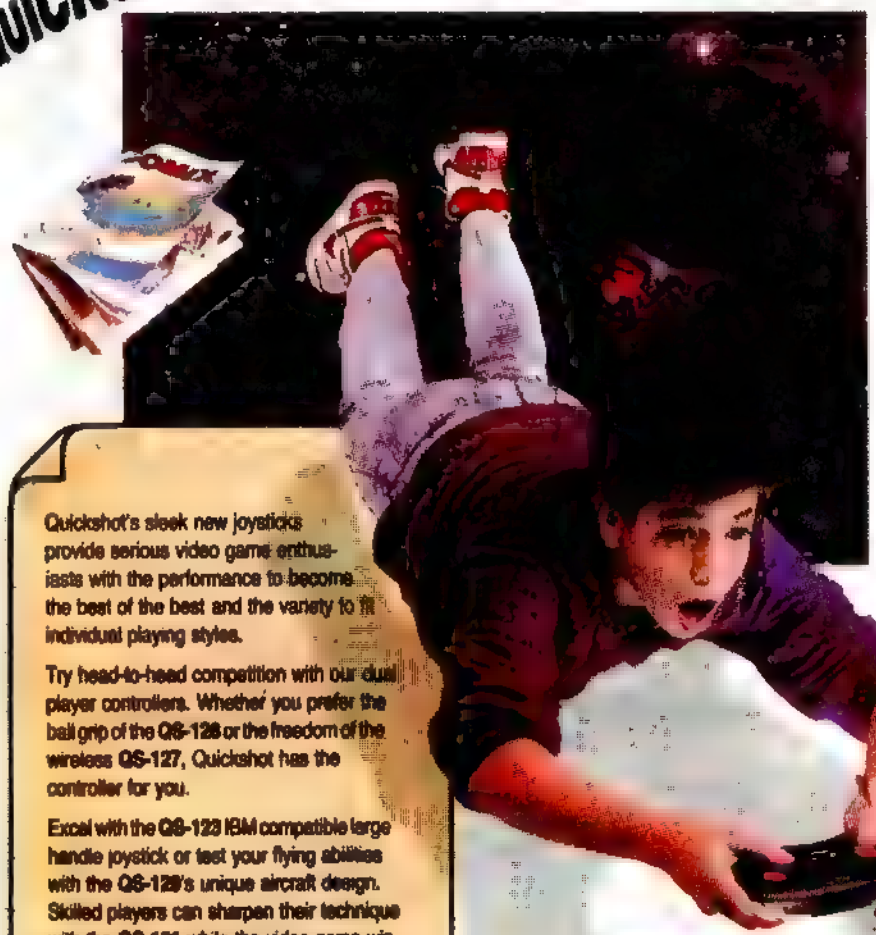

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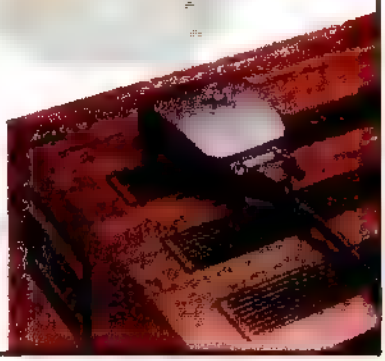

QuickShot®

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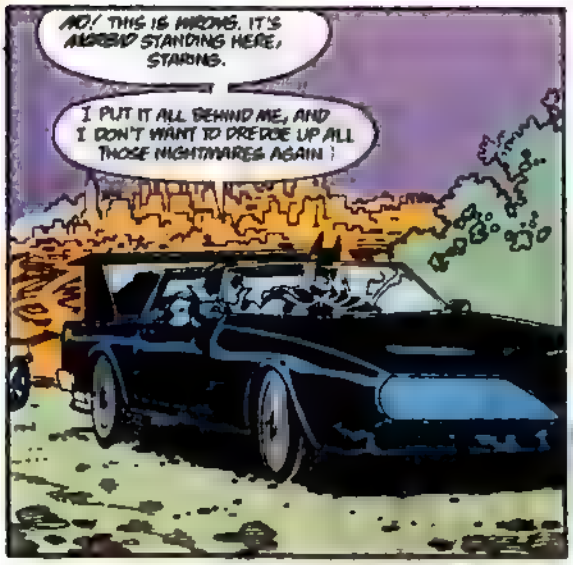
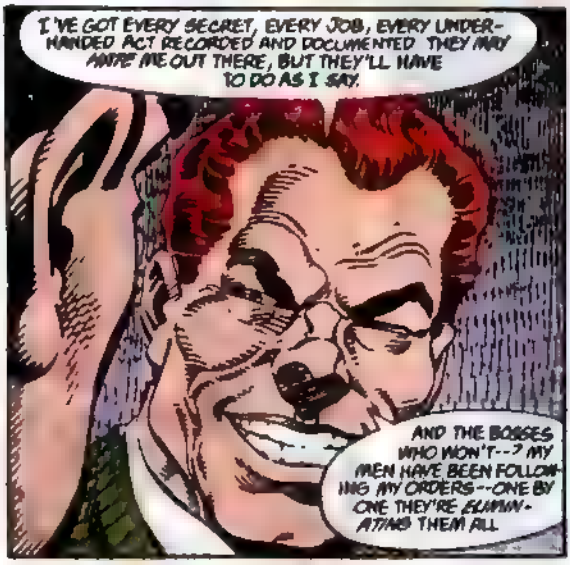

AD! THIS IS WRONG. IT'S ALFRED STANDING HERE, STARING.
I PUT IT ALL BEHIND ME, AND I DON'T WANT TO DREDGE UP ALL THOSE NIGHTMARES AGAIN!

LET'S JUST NAIL HIM AND BE DONE WITH IT.
JUST A FEW SECONDS MORE. HE'S COMING OUT.

YOU SAID YOU'D TURN OVER THE PROOF TO ME. YOU SAID YOU WOULDN'T USE IT AGAINST ME AGAIN.
YOU'VE LEARNED A LESSON, TIFT.
DON'T TRY TO OUTCON A CON

THAT DAMN BOOK-- I SHOULD HAVE DESTROYED IT WHEN YOU SHOWED IT TO ME.
THAT "DAMN BOOK" IS GOING TO MAKE ME KING OF ORGANIZED CRIME.


I'VE GOT EVERY SECRET, EVERY JOB, EVERY UNDER-HANDED ACT RECORDED AND DOCUMENTED. THEY MAY HATE ME OUT THERE, BUT THEY'LL HAVE TO DO AS I SAY.
AND THE BOSSES WHO WON'T--? MY MEN HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING MY ORDERS--ONE BY ONE THEY'RE SLAUGHTERING THEM ALL

I'LL OWN THE ONES WHO ARE LEFT. THEY'RE GOING TO BE MINE TO TWIST AND SNAP ANY TIME I WISH
21

BATMAN!

WGSN

IT'S LIKE I SAID, TAFT-- I'M GOING TO BE A KING!

BLAMBLAMBLAM

OH, MY GOD, MY GOD--
--HE'S DEAD!

YOU KNEW? YOU KNEW THIS WAS GOING TO HAPPEN, DIDN'T YOU?
DIDN'T YOU?
CONTINUED.

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L-3850

Dear Denny,

I thought I'd wait until I had read the complete "Many Deaths of the Batman" trilogy (#433-435) before commenting. After reading, a commentary on this story is going to be difficult, because I can't say enough about the story. I'll try.

Story: a brilliant stroke of genius from John Byrne. Better even than his run on SUPERMAN. I like stories that challenge the reader, and this one was a real winner. Mere words aren't enough. Grade: A.

Artistic execution: some of Aparo and DeCarlo's best work. I guess good, solid stories bring out the best in artists. Grade: A.

Cover: typical Byrne, meaning an excellent cover. Grade: A-plus.

Here's hoping "Year Three" is just as great.

Jacob Gilbert
Troy, NY

*****

Dear Sir:

Recently I have been buying all of the BATMAN comics I can find. I've also bought the BATMAN MOVIE BOOK. Do you have a catalogue of Batman merchandise? If so, please send me one. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
Jeremy Sanders
Oakland, MD

We've got this little office down at the far end of the hall where three, sometimes four, staffers spend their days answering phones, writing memos, and making judgments as to the artistic integrity of the hundreds of proposals we get from companies who want to market Batman merchandise. Because of the volume of Bat-stuff on the market these days, and the speed at which it comes out, there's no way we could keep a catalogue up to date. Sorry about that, Jeremy.

*****

Dear Denny and Dan,

Eight of Batman's instructors dead. Was one of these the one who taught the 'vibrating palm' technique as mentioned in the "Blind Justice" story by Sam Hamm?

In the original origin (sounds funny) Bruce studied detective work, criminology, toxicology, defense and other skills in seclusion. It was all book-learning and, as such, made Batman seem somehow more immediate, more attainable.

In Frank Miller's most recent rewriting of the origin *(Year One)*, Bruce had obviously studied, but he had very little experience. It wasn't a trained martial artist who let little Holly stab him in the thigh. And it was an amateur (self-admitted) who had a TV set dropped on his head while trying to bust three cat-burglars on a fire escape.

My point is: when are the modifications of his origin to end? Sure, "Year One" left the issue pretty well open to interpretation (though I'd prefer it clouded in mystery). Lately, though, he's an expert at *everything*. He studied with the masters of every art the world over. When? Between the ages of 18 and 25? That's the closest I can figure. I think it could take a lifetime to master *one* martial art form. To suggest that the Batman became even proficient in as many disciplines as recent stories indicate makes him more unbelievable.

You can see why I prefer his origin clouded in mystery. Thanks for listening.

Charlie Harris
Tucson, AZ

*****

Dear Denny,

I have just finished reading BATMAN #434. I must say it is quite a mystery who is behind the killings of these men. It is certainly a worthy mystery for the Batman to take on. It is also weird that the murderers are getting the victims to dress as Batman; perhaps the killer is a well-known enemy of the real Batman?

I would also like to say that I think Jim Aparo is a very great asset to the Bat-team. He is certainly an excellent penciller.

Respectfully,
Brad Campbel
A pleased fan
Stellarton, Nova Scotia

*****

Dear Denny (and company),

Wow! What a cover! Would love to see an issue or two pencilled by Mr. Byrne in the near future. His black-caped version of the Dark Knight is visually stunning. Another artist who draws a good Batman is JUSTICE LEAGUE's Kevin Maguire. He drew a fabulous pinup in "Blind Justice" part 1 and I would like to see more. Over the past few years, since THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, Batman has been more sinister and these two gentlemen portray the dark side of him well.

Can I talk about the movie? A clip I saw on television showed a scene where Batman was holding a crook by the collar and the crook said, "What are you?" Keaton pulled him closer and hissed, "I'm Batman!" I thought it was great. I also saw a scene where Batman crashed through a skylight. He looked just like he should, just like in the comic books! I was amazed. Keaton and Nicholson will be great, I tell ya!!

I will sign off now with a couple of requests: (1) Please keep the quality up on your marvelous work with BATMAN, DETECTIVE and THE QUESTION, and (2) PLEASE GIVE US ANOTHER BAT-TITLE!

Yours sincerely,
George Crawford
Hawick, Scotland

As of this month, you'll be seeing this particular Bat-Title an extra time each month for awhile. Will that do ya?

*****

Dear Editor:

Well, BATMAN #434 is here, and after reading the second part of John Byrne's trilogy I can say I'm satisfied but not pleased. The story was interesting, but far from original. Batman disappearing and the city being thrown into a state of confusion was one of the hoariest old plot lines of the 1950's and early 1960's, and mass murder being tossed in doesn't disguise it all that much. While I'm fooled as to who the murderer is, I'm not all that red-hot to find out, either. My guess would be Ra's al Ghul, the only one I can think of who knows enough about Batman's past to pull something like this off.

The story served as another good showcase for Commissioner James Gordon, whom you are wisely building into a major character. With no Robin and no Batgirl, Gordon is left to carry a huge load in a book with a rapidly shrinking supporting cast. It's comforting to see he's quite capable of it. I enjoyed his remark, "...if such a man has friends." He should, but he doesn't. Maybe someday he'll wise up. He tells himself, and his writers tell us, that being a loner improves his effectiveness. I say it retards it. How can you protect the real world if you don't fully live in it?

Also, please bring back the one villain who is Bats' intellectual equal, Professor Hugo Strange.

Charles D. Brown
Brentwood, NY

Dear Dan and Denny,

Thank you for the three-part Byrne version of the Batman. This is the most I've enjoyed this title since Mr. Moench left the series many years ago. It's amazing that after fifty years of stories we can still find out something new about his past. In his original origin, young Bruce trained himself, both in mind and body, but over the years as Batman attained greater and greater skills it's been harder to swallow this self-training explanation. It has only been since this new, post-CRISIS version of Batman that we have seen his quest throughout the world for expertise in various fields. I'd like to see more.

I think that the mini-series within a series structure works very well in this title since the Batman's life tends to be very episodic anyway. I do, however, miss the long-term character development that one writer can achieve over a long period of time. I'm sure you can work out a balance.

On a personal note to Denny: About an earlier "From the Den," please continue writing under the name Denny O'Neil. It has a certain ring to it, an informalness that "Dennis" just can't touch. I've grown up with Denny. He's the guy who wrote those great Batman stories. He gave me the powerful GREEN LANTERN/GREEN ARROW stories which still make me think every time I read them. And of course there is the enigmatic Question. When I sit down with a book by Denny I know I'm in for a hell of a good time, or maybe bad, violent, thought-provoking, but always powerful stories populated by real people. I'm sure this Dennis guy is very nice and can spin a good yarn, but please, my friend is Denny.

Sincerely,
Mark Balbes
Carrboro, NC

*****

Dear Dan,

It was good to see the return of Batman, the detective in BATMAN #435. Of late, too many writers seem to have relegated this facet of the character's personality to the closet. Detective tales are fun because the reader is able to see the hero's brilliant thought process at work, discerning obvious clues, always one step ahead of us. Any generic hero can put on a costume and punch out colorful villains, but Batman always seemed to be on a level above them, battling and challenging his enemies mentally.

I mention this because Batman appeared too clever in this storyline, impossibly so. He pieced together the mystery too early with so few and diverse clues. I love a good mystery as long as the solution involves fair play. John Byrne is a good writer, and I believe he was attempting to illustrate Batman's superior talents, but I think he stretched this a touch too far this time.

Despite this shortcoming, I was entertained by "The Many Deaths of the Batman" and would enjoy seeing another Byrne story in the next year. I wonder what he would have done for Batman with an opportunity similar to that which he had with Superman.

Mahalo,
Mark Lucas
San Francisco, CA

*****

Dear Dan and Den:

RE: BATMAN #434 and some added comments about certain other things as well...

I appreciate a good mystery. I suppose that is why I used to scarf up all the stories I could find by Agatha Christie, Ellery Queen, and the master, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The best Batman stories are good mysteries—the kind that make us think and try to outwit the protagonist. In order to do this, though, one must have clues. And that, from what I can see, is what "The Many Deaths of the Batman" lacks.

We have several murders on our hands, so to speak—six, I think—executed differently but similarly in that all the victims were wearing a Batman uniform. There is also a logical sequence of events that leads from one murder to the next. Yet the reader gets the uneasy feeling that something is missing. Perhaps one can find a motive if one looks. But there is nothing spoken or demonstrated that brings everything together in a reasonable explanation. Perhaps my powers of deduction are lacking.

Perhaps John Byrne is just being sneaky.

Speaking of John Byrne, he always had a knack for bringing the supporting characters to the fore. In the case of this story he focused most of the action on Jim Gordon. Hey, when is the Commissioner going to get his own book? I would read it.

As to this issue's "From the Den": I smoke. I'm not particularly proud of the fact, but I do. I also have a few beers every now and again. I'm not condoning the practice, but it is part of a way of life—why else would the tobacco companies and the breweries continue to make money? Children see their parents smoking and drinking as a matter of the course of everyday life. Why should the comics try to cloud this fact? And don't we realize that comics are not just for children anymore? Denny, please don't try to gloss over something that most of us take for granted.

And wasn't it you who, in an earlier time, gave us the portrait of Roy Harper shooting up? Were we more sophisticated then? I don't know...

Roger D. (Rogl) Case
Virginia Beach, VA

*****

Dear Batpeople,

It seems that everyone is jumping on the Batman bandwagon these days, probably from interest in the movie. While it's nice to see Mr. Wayne getting the attention he deserves, this trendy aspect is kind of annoying to me.

Batman has been around fifty years? I'm less than half that age and I can say that since my earlier youth, Batman has been my hero. I think it was the fact that he didn't have super-powers that so attracted me to him. Superman could walk into a hail of bullets with no fear, but for the Batman to do so took courage.

I loved the comic books, the television show, and I'm sure I'll love the movie. I guess I'm just writing to thank you guys, especially Mr. Kane, for providing me and countless others with such a great role model. I think Batman is the reason I don't drink or do drugs, and have a basically good moral system. Because of this one comic book character, my whole life has been affected.

Congratulations and thanks for giving me a hero.

A true fan,
Phil Look
Henderson, TN

What more could we ask? A nice place to end...

...Elliot S. Maggin

FROM THE DEN

When I arrived this morning, there was a buzz of excitement in the place. This office suite full of highly trained professionals reminded me of a grade school room on the day of the class picnic.

Now, at five in the afternoon, when the day's energies and crises are usually reaching their crescendo, the halls are quiet, the doors closed.

Today is the day of the screening. DC staffers are seeing that movie. The B-word movie.

I've seen it already, so I'm sitting as lonely as a pacifist in the Pentagon, doing a little of this and a little of that. Clearing my desk, mostly, getting ready to take a long swing around the country. I'll be traveling somewhere in Louisiana when the B-word movie opens here in New York, so I'll miss many of the important reviews. That's okay, though. In fact, I'm glad I'll be forced to let my own reactions mellow a bit before they're adulterated by the hundreds of other opinions that will surely fill the media in the next few days. Sometimes, I hear and read so much in a short span of time that I don't know which thoughts are mine, and which I've borrowed.

In a couple of weeks, I'll get around to the reviews I'll be missing because of travel. And by then, I'll know what I really think.

Meanwhile, I'm grateful for what the B-word movie has already accomplished—making the DC offices peaceful at five of a Wednesday. Compared to that, anything else it might achieve will be minor.

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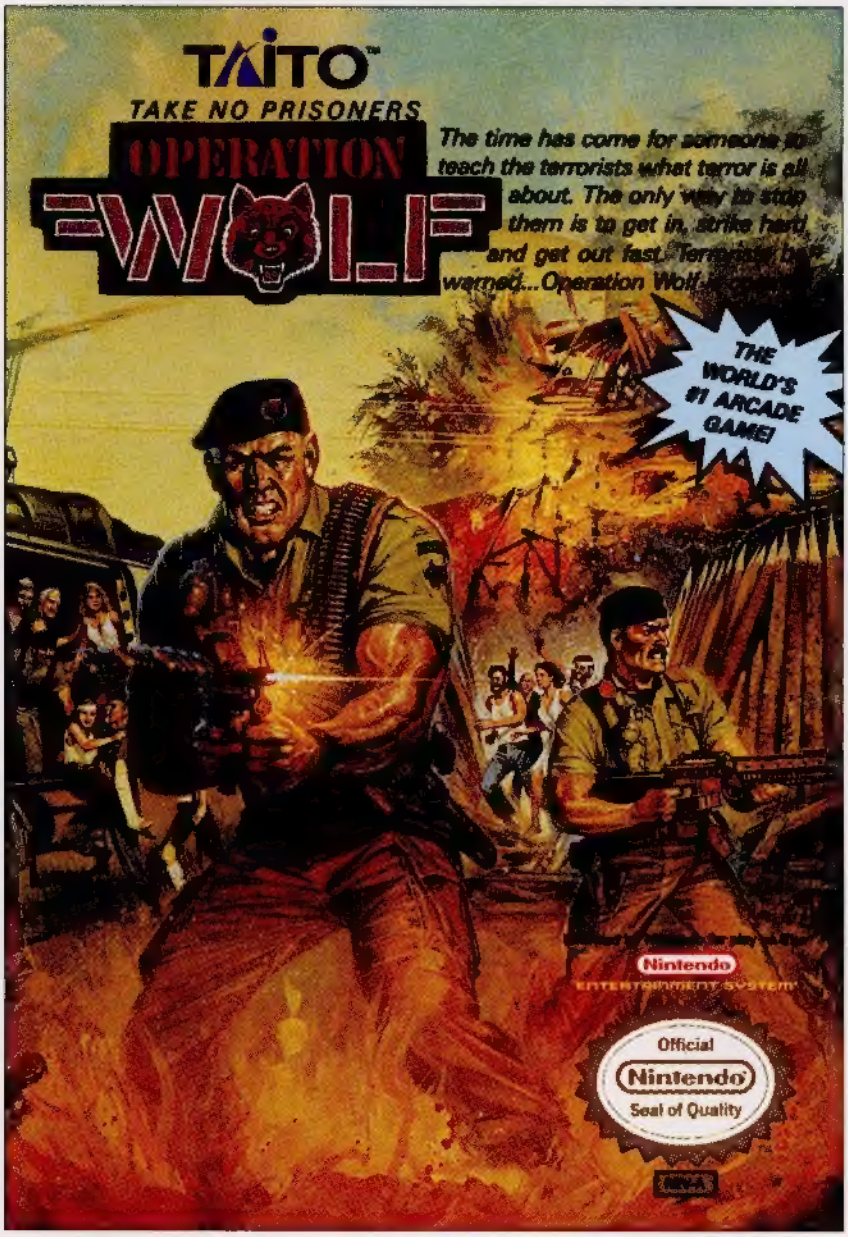
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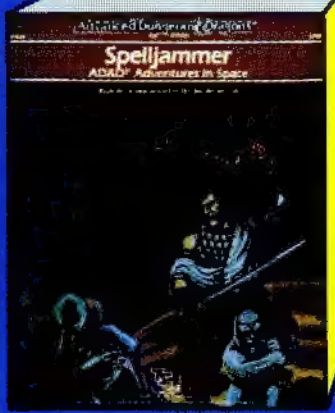

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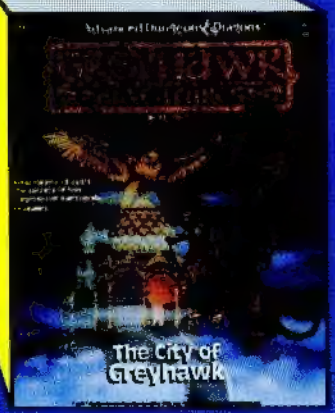

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